

# Opening of Indigenous Peoples' International Polar Year

International Polar Year 2007-2008, Kautokeino, Norway, 14 February 2007  
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International Polar Year - IPY is an international research contribution aimed at increasing our collective knowledge about the Arctic and the Antarctic. "The year" lasts from March 1, 2007 to March 1, 2009, and is coordinated internationally by the International Council for Science (ICSU) and World Meteorological Organisation (WMO). In Norway the work is coordinated by the Norwegian Research Council. Three international polar years have been arranged earlier, and the first one was arranged in 1882/83. The Polar Year is the world largest coordinated research contribution in which more than 60 000 researchers participate.

For the first time the Polar Year includes a human dimension with focus on changes in the indigenous peoples' societies in the Arctic. Many of the research projects are initiated from the indigenous peoples' own institutions. The indigenous peoples' societies in the Arctic face major changes such as warming of the northern areas. While the international society is still discussing the reasons for climate change, it is important to ask how the indigenous peoples should handle and adapt to the ongoing changes while simultaneously taking care of already existing values and knowledge in their societies. Intensive multidisciplinary activities are expected through cooperation between indigenous peoples in the circumpolar north as a result of the Polar Year. It is of great importance that also the northern institutions and especially the indigenous peoples' institutions play a major role in producing and managing knowledge. Knowledge remains where it is developed and used, and local knowledge is an important basis for building robust societies.

The opening of Indigenous Peoples' International Polar Year 2007/2008 takes place in Kautokeino, Norway, 14 February 2007, organised by International Centre for Reindeer Husbandry, Sámi University College/Nordic Sámi Institute, Association of World Reindeer Herders, Resource Centre for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Kautokeino municipality. Representatives of indigenous peoples from all Arctic regions, climate researchers, managers, politicians, reindeer herders and Sámi youth from Kautokeino will participate in the opening ceremony. Through projects rooted in scientific institutions in Kautokeino among others, efforts are aimed at a broad cooperation focusing on indigenous societies in the north, and simultaneously to prepare indigenous youth in the further process. A research station existed in Kautokeino during the International Polar Year 1882/83 to study the Northern Light, while this time Kautokeino will have its own projects during the Polar Year. In 2009 the new Sámi scientific building will be opened and all research and development institutions in Kautokeino will be located under the same roof.



*IPY 1882/1883 Kautokeino. (S. Tromholt)*



*2009: New scientific building in Kautokeino*

